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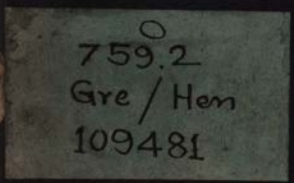
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XVI

HENRY WOODS, R.A.:

HIS LIFE AND WORK.

The Art Annual, 1915.

Henry Woods,

Royal Academician.

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BY

JAMES GREIG.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

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Il Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice. (1895.)

Henry Woods, R.A.

IN order better to place the work of Mr. Henry Woods, whose Venetian pictures have for many years given pleasure to numerous people, it may not be impertinent to summarise in brief space the outstanding phases of British art from mediæval times, when it reached its highest form of expression.

Up to the first half of the fourteenth century English illuminations were unsurpassed in Europe. Intensity of feeling, dramatic conception, and wealth of colour were synthesised in designs of wonderful beauty. English embroideries, too, excelled those of all other countries. Foreign kings and potentates of Church and State were eager to obtain examples of the Opus Anglicanum. Our great cathedrals rose in this creative period. At its close English art lost for centuries almost all initiative and artistic distinction. Domestic architecture alone remained quick with new ideas evoked by the passing of mediæval conditions of national life. It became no longer necessary to fortify castle or country house, and instead of crenellated turrets, ramparts, and loopholes bristling with guns, the English castle and manor became homes of beauty and comfort in Tudor times. The crafts were practised, particularly that of the silversmith, and some of the few earlier pieces that remain are very charming and stately in design. The gift of impassioned design, that noble endowment of the Middle Ages, has not, however, come back to English pictorial art. The Reformation seemed to deprive art in England of all monumental and dramatic impulse which depends on synthetic design for vital expression. And the advent of the meticulous genius of Holbein dominated the art of England and helped to atrophy the creative instincts of our painters. They produced elaborate miniatures, a tribute more to their sight than insight. Albert Durer was a far greater artist in design than Holbein, yet the nobility of his conceptions and craftsmanship had no effect on contemporary English art. Indeed, it is only within the past fifty years that the genius of the Nuremberger has aroused any practical interest among English draughtsmen.

After Holbein's, another alien, but greater spirit, came to English art with Rubens and Vandyck, which also was very considerably influenced by the work of

Rosina. (1907.)

(By permission of the Corporation of Warrington.)

(By permission of Major Edmund Pullar.)

A Venetian Autolycus. (1900.)

the seventeenth century Dutchmen. In fact, it is to the Netherland School that we owe all that is of permanent value in modern British art. To this northern inspiration we owe Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, Hogarth, Wilkie, and our school of landscape painting. Sir Joshua Reynolds was to a great extent indebted to Vandyck. He failed when he attempted the "grand style" of the Italians, and the failure of Barry and Haydon was even more complete because their faith and courage were greater. The Early Victorian historical painters were deplorably deficient in imaginative design, and the strength of Etty's pictures lay in their colour, not in rhythmic arrangement of mass. The pre-Raphaelites, the noblest failure of all, exercised considerable authority as colourists, and their sincerity and poetic emotion are responsible for moving work like the "Ophelia" by Millais in the Tate Gallery. In the main, however, the famous brotherhood subordinated pictorial design to literary motive, with the result that most of their pictures are curiously void in artistic intimacy. They lacked the imagination to make the "far" seem homelier, and they estranged the "near" by elaborate detachment.

For mastery of design, deliberate or instinctive, we have to go to the works of Turner, Constable, and Charles Keene. Constable and Keene's powers of design were confined to the selection of a point of view. They never had too much canvas or paper for their ideas. Turner's vivid imagination often made his pictures seem like orations whose ideas are lost in a confused outburst of rhetoric. But at their best his compositions are magnificently impressive and perfectly coherent.

The brilliant illustrators of the 'sixties acquired a certain facility in a form of composition which was limited in its development by the tyranny of reproduction.

Reference to the illustrators of the 'sixties reminds me that we have reached the period of Mr. Woods and the phase of art in whose exposition he first won recognition. In the following account of his life and work we shall endeavour to indicate the influences which have helped to direct his artistic outlook and form his method of expression. We use the word method advisedly, for Mr. Woods early found the style best suited to convey his ideas and observation in pictorial terms, and his art has steadily advanced within its pleasant circuit.

Born at Warrington, on April 22nd, 1846, Mr. Woods while still very young heard the clear call of art, and fortunately he was able to respond to it free from any serious interruption. Unlike many British artists he did not "drop into art" from some other profession. He began the study of art much in the same way as a young

(By permission of Wolf Harris, Esq.)

A Farm Loggia, Veneto. (1904.)

HENRY WOODS, R.A.

(Buckingham Palace. By gracious permission of H.M. the King.)

Rivals. (1891.)

A Mill Weir, Serra Valle, Veneto. (1908.)

man studies law, medicine, or divinity. Art was to be his life-work, not a delightful hobby or a crutch to help to support him in his efforts to master some other *métier*. In this respect he was in the position of his French *confrères* who enter the schools of the Beaux Arts or Julian's, as others become Sorbonnistes in Theology or Jurisprudence. Engravings after pictures by Maclise and Frederick Goodall were very popular in our artist's boyhood, and those of them in his father's collection gave the lad great joy, and they still interest the man, particularly the humorous "Snap Apple Night," by Maclise.

Chester Cathedral also impressed him in his childhood. On his annual visits he was always so happy in its red sandstone cloister and aisle covered with faded whitewash that it grieved him sorely some time back to see the building in its "restored" condition. The sweet tones of the time-hallowed walls of the aisle were no more, and in their place were frescoes so common that they might have come from the hands of an ordinary "paper hanger." He was saddened, too, in walking through the streets of the city itself, though here and there he found remnants of the beauty that pleased his eyes some sixty years ago. At that time William Huggins, of the "Liverpool School," lived in Chester and painted portraits, but his name is best remembered by his really admirable animal pictures. Specimens of his work were seen recently at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, but, with Mr. Woods, we hope to see one day in London a more representative collection of the work of Huggins and his "school-fellows." Mr. Woods often called at Huggins's house on the annual trips, and the boy's open-eyed admiration for

At the Guidecca, Venice. (1902.)

(By permission of Messrs. Arthur Tooth & Sons.) La Frisanella. (1895.)

the artist's pictures gave real enjoyment, which was increased when the youngster, sure of himself, declared that he, too, was going to be a painter.

This determination was strengthened by the magnificent "Art Treasures Exhibition" in Manchester in 1857. Though but a child at that date, Mr. Woods, in common with older people, was impressed by the power of the Old Masters represented. This exhibition, which showed for the first time the artistic wealth of England, did much for native art; but it also, alas! created a desire among foreigners to possess our treasures, and the deplorable exodus which soon thereafter began continues disastrously to the music of alien gold.

Mr. Woods and Fate have been friendly from the beginning. That fickle jade encouraged him in his desire to be an artist. At his first school he found that she had brought him to a master who was an enthusiastic amateur painter who made his pupils draw on two afternoons a week, much to our subject's joy and the horror of the prosaic boys. He was fortunate at the local Grammar School, for water-colour painting was the head master's hobby. There was nothing of the great Panjandrum about this dominie. He was very human and sympathetic, and the newcomer's gift of drawing condoned many a lapse from grace in the lad's general studies.

At this period young Woods attended the Warrington School of Art, and his diligence and talent won for him a bronze medal in 1857, which is one of his artistic treasures. Art was then "on" England, and nowhere more effectively than at Warrington. All sorts and conditions of the natives were stimulated by

(By permission of A. M. Ogston, Esq.)

The Fisherman's Courtship. (1898.)

its magic. All moods and methods of artistic expression were discussed in leisure hours—the impasto of Reynolds, the subtlety of Gainsborough, the robust humour of Hogarth, and so on. By-and-by the town became talked about as an art centre and attracted clever young men to its school. Among the number was (Sir) Luke Fildes. This was another happy arrangement of friendly Fate, for Fildes and young Woods became comrades and ultimately brothers-in-law and fellow-Academicians. Sir Luke came to London in 1863, and two years later Mr. Woods followed him with a scholarship from South Kensington. Stained glass was his immediate branch of study, and while the master was considering what course that study should take, Mr. Woods was put in the antique class, where he worked with the Hon. George Howard (the late Earl of Carlisle), whose industry set an excellent example to the other students. The steps from the "antique" to the "life" and then to the painting rooms were soon made by Mr. Woods. His progress was rapid, and it soon became evident that his mind and talent were not adapted to stained-glass designing. He was told in plain terms by the authorities that he showed no sign of future success in that branch of art, and that they were not supposed to teach painting at South Kensington. They had no wish, however, to interfere with his study of painting, and agreed to renew his scholarship, a generous waiving of official right for which Mr. Woods has ever been grateful. So he remained at the schools, augmenting the knowledge gained there by study at the Museum.

The result of all this endeavour became apparent in his work. Draughtsmanship grew sure and strong, the keen-eyed noted a distinct appreciation of character and a clear understanding of the elements of expressive composition. Young Woods was aware of his growing power, and set about in search of some other means for its fuller development. Fate was again at his side, and led him to the desk of the late Mr. W. L. Thomas, the founder of the *Graphic*, and staunch friend of all young artists. Illustration was then highly popular and distinguished. The fine work of Keene, Millais, Burne-Jones, Du Maurier, and Boyd Houghton still acted as an incentive and was emulated by the brilliant young men gathered under the direction of Mr. Thomas. Among them were Randolph Caldecott, Fred. Walker, G. J. Pinwell, Herkomer, Luke Fildes, Sydney P. Hall, who represented the *Graphic* in the Franco-German War, and Henry Woods.

Playmates. (1906.)

(By permission of Mrs. Whitaker Ellis.)

(By permission of Messrs. Vicars Bros.)

In the Sun. (1883.)

Drawing for illustration was the best possible training for a young artist of originality. It quickened mind, eye, and hand, and enabled the beginner to keep the wolf from the door while he was maturing his talents as a painter. The introduction of process-engraving and photography has practically ruined illustration, and since the decline began there is no doubt that draughtsmanship in England has deteriorated.

Illustration for magazines and for stories by Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, and Anthony Trollope, and drawings for the *Graphic* (Mr. Woods was one of its original staff), formed the bulk of his work at the period beginning with the 'seventies, though he began contributing to the Royal Academy in 1869. The discipline—rapidity, accuracy—enforced by the limitations of illustration was of immense service to Mr. Woods, whose art depends so much on the sudden seizure and clear record of passing scenes and momentary expression. His drawings suffered at the hands of the engraver, as did those of his colleagues;

(By permission of Alfred Palmer, Esq.)

Preparations for the First Communion. (1883.)

(By permission of Edwin Tate, Esq.) La Promessa Sposa. (1890.)

(By permission of the Corporation of Burnley.)

A Venetian Christening Party. (1896.)

and if, on the whole, artists now-a-days are better served by the process-man, yet there is a charm about the prints from wood blocks of the 'sixties and 'seventies which impressions from the zinc or copper of to-day do not possess.

Between 1869 and 1876 Mr. Woods contributed annually to Burlington House pictures such as "Going Home" (1873), a scene near Hurley on the Thames; "Haymakers" (1874); and "A Good Bargain" (1875). These early paintings, though they showed sincere study and careful craftsmanship, failed to attract much attention. So when in 1876, acting on the advice of his old friend Sir Luke Fildes, Mr. Woods went to Venice on a visit, he was practically unknown as a painter. Venice bewildered him. Its wonderful beauty allured him into a love which grows stronger with age. Few artists have been able to resist the glamour of Venetian life and light and colour. Carpaccio, Canaletto, Guardi, Longhi, and Turner all fell

(By permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.) The Admonition. (1907.)

to the witchery of the sea-born city. Ruskin was its greatest worshipper—its slave from that September day in 1845 when he, also unknown to fame, first set foot in Venice and moved impatiently through the motley crowd of the Piazza to feast his eyes on the glory of St. Mark's Cathedral. For eight years this fair, slight youth with long hair was a familiar figure in church and palace and *campo*, in *calle* and *fondamente*. Almost always alone, with a portfolio under his arm, he would remain for three, four, or five hours in St. Mark's or the Ducal Palace, enjoying the gorgeous colour of the one, noting the splendour of Tintoretto and Veronese in the other. Ruskin said: "That man is always happy who is in the presence of something which he cannot know to the full, which he is always going to know." This was his own condition. He himself was never tired of "going to know." In Venice he penetrated "every corner where he thought there might remain some vestige of a fresco to copy, some symbol to discover," says M. Robert de la Sizeranne. "The sacristans and custodians watched him with stupefaction as he put ladders against the walls and clambered up to the Doges, recumbent on their tombs, to ascertain if the sleeping figures were carved as delicately on the side against the wall as on the front exposed to the gaze of the faithful, thus raising the dust of ages under the vaults, and troubling the peace of "immemorial spiders." The passers-by could see him clinging to the pillars of this palace, like some woodpecker to the trunk of a tree, that he might examine the detail of every capital and ascertain on every leaf if the sculptor had known how to indicate the difference between the ribs which support the lobe of the leaf and the irregular veins which wander over its membrane. He was to be seen also exploring the desert places of the Lagoons. Murana, Burano, S. Francesco del Deserto, Torcello, all these low-lying islets with their buildings which, as he said, "lie like a little company of ships becalmed on a far-away sea." And the "Stones of Venice" is the immortal memorial of this enthusiastic study of a beauty that is fast passing away and is at the time of writing in great danger of total destruction by Hunnish bombs. Mr. Woods' love for Venice is not less sincere than Ruskin's, but it affects him differently. He has not concerned himself with the origins of Venetian life as recorded in the stones of Venice. There is no evidence in his work that he ever listened at the lips of carved saint or grotesque for the murmur of voices speaking of the mind and the emotions of bygone generations. It is the Venetian life of to-day that appeals to him, he no doubt holding that the life of to-day is the best mirror of Venetian life of the past. And if his presentation of its architecture is not quickened

(By permission of Messrs. Vicars Bros.)

Bargaining for an Old Master. (1888.)

A Water Seller at San Rocco, Venice. (1885.)
(By permission of the Rev. T. S. Cooper.)

by spiritual significance, its artistic distinction and homely charm are suggested by him with rare fidelity. In his work we find Venice always gay in colour and peopled with happy men, women, and children. He is content to admire the dramatic significance of Venice when, looking west from Lido at sunset, it seems for a moment as though the "whole visible world, without motion, without sound, were dissolving away in a glory and splendour of light and ineffable colour." Nor does he paint Venice under brief spells of storm when the echoes of thunder roaring among the Fruilian Alps reverberate with startling sounds that suggest at the dead of night the dying groans of giants drowning in the silent waters of the dark Lagoons. In his pictures we have not seen the palaces on the Grand Canal in a silvery mist, when they appear as if made of the finest lace worked by fairy fingers using the dome of the Salute as a pillow. These moods he wisely leaves to the Turners and the Whistlers. He is in a sense an historical painter, that is, in the same sense as Carpaccio, Longhi, the seventeenth century Dutchmen, our own Hogarth and Wilkie, and the men of the Ukioyu School of Japan were historical painters. Their pictures and his mirror the passing world of their day and become history, and the greater their immediate truth, the greater their future value.

Any one who has been to Venice can vouch for the fidelity to fact evident in the *œuvre* of Mr. Woods. The illustrations in this volume are ample proof of his sincerity, his unerring vision for the characteristics of Venetian life, and its fascinating, maze-like environment, where it is possible to search the whole day for a passage into a desired *campo* only five minutes distant in time. A wrong turning in Venice may lead the stranger to tiring but always profitable tramping.

After close on forty years' acquaintance, Mr. Woods knows every *rio, campo, calle, fondamente* and *traghetto*—he has become as familiar with Venice as one after a time grows familiar with all the hide-and-seek corners of a Tudor country house. But on his first visit, as he confesses, Mr. Woods was

bewildered, not so much by the confusion of its narrow ways, but by the extent of its pictorial wealth. He came on pictures everywhere, and they did not require the adventitious aid of old costumes to make them romantic. Beppo, the gondolier, was as swaggering and handsome as any gallant of Titian's time, and no marchioness from a Veronese picture looked more alluring than a fair Venetian arrayed in the gay robes of a *festa*. He did not know where to begin the harvest ripe to his eyes, with the result that he gathered little during this first visit. Nevertheless, he was able to exhibit at the Royal Academy two Venetian street scenes in 1877. In the following year he returned to Venice and began the serious work of his life. After taking a studio he started at once to learn the language, a task which took him a long time to accomplish. The task was worth the trouble, however, for he now finds a never-ending pleasure in listening to discussions at a *traghetto* or Rialto Market. The experience gained on his first visit to Venice was of great use to him on settling in the city. The bewilderment had worn off, and he was able to sit down and produce admirable pictures, such as "A Scene in Venice" and "Fishing Boats: San Pietro di Castello," which were hung in Burlington House in 1878. It was not till 1880, however, that his work attracted attention at the Academy. "The Ducal Courtyard," "Street-Trading in Venice," and "Preparing for the Festa" won instant recognition. They were bright glimpses of actuality, and were followed in 1881 by "At the Foot of the Rialto, Venice," and the "Gondolier's Courtship." These works showed that Mr. Woods, in emulation of Ruskin's dictum, was still "going to know," or as Stevenson has it, he was travelling hopefully. In the following year Mr. Woods astonished his friends and the public with the remarkable "Bargaining for an Old Master" (p. 13), which was purchased by Mr. Holbrook Gaskell, and no doubt won an Associateship for Mr. Woods. This canvas was an inventory of Mr. Woods' knowledge—a proof of his powers of faithful representation rather than an impulsive record of some momentary vision. It was

The Towers of San Rocco and the Frari, Venice. (1889.)
(By permission of the Rev. T. S. Cooper.)

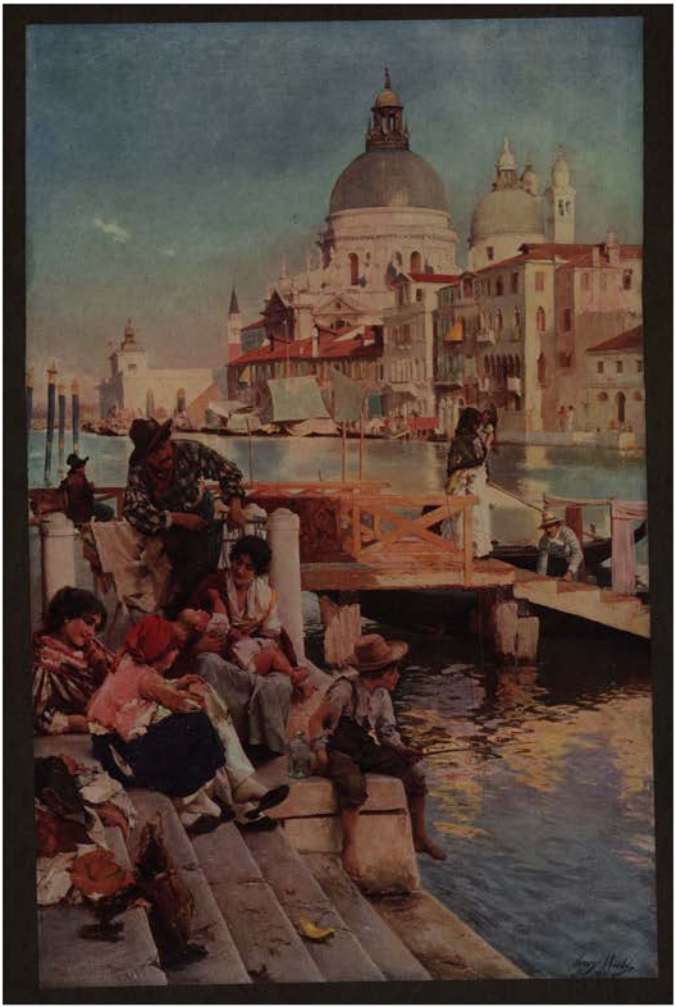
an index to his temperament and craftsmanship, and its qualities of truth deliberately fixed are the same qualities, vitalised and more gracious, which distinguish all his later achievements. He sat daily in front of this quaint shop unmolested while painting its curious contents, until every detail of the innumerable articles was finished to his liking. The *pittoresco* proprietor of this mass of odd-ments, which took three hours to set out each morning, was a delightful study. He was apparently of the type of the antiquarian Padrone, who loved his rarities and rubbish so much that he was unwilling to part with them. At any rate, he told Mr. Woods that he was "getting thin on the business," which also grew "beautifully less" until the shop was closed some twenty years ago.

As these early efforts indicate, Mr. Woods is essentially an open air painter, and in order to paint light truthfully in inclement weather he reconstructed an old palace, turning it into a most convenient studio. In the *Art Journal* for 1886 there is a clever sketch of the building set in its charming surroundings. It lies at the south-west corner of Venice near the church of St. Sebastiano, the burial-place of Veronese and the home of some of his best pictures, now sadly defaced by time.

The studio can be reached by way of the Zattere, which is one of the most delightful districts of Venice. This Riva runs from the Dogana, past S. Spirito, a church of no import-ance, says Ruskin, and the visitor may stop at the tavern frequented by the famous critic and read the tablet to his memory on the front of the building, and eat or drink either inside the house or on a terrace floating on the Guidecca Canal. From there he will see the islands of the Guidecca and San Giorgio Maggiore, with their beautiful churches built by Palladio in the sixteenth century, and to the south-west he can gaze across the placid waters to the Laguna Morta and Fusina. Along the quay lie vessels from Albion and elsewhere, among them blue timber boats from Istria, on the Adriatic, with flaming sails of orange and gold, harmonising with the gorgeous colour of blossom hanging over walls, stained by sun and rain. Painters, mostly women, will be found seated here and there, some under gay-hued umbrellas, others sheltered from the light by com-modious hats of fantastic confections. Admirers of Tiepolo, the brilliant decorator, may enter the commonplace church of Gesuati and study his fine frescoes on the roof. But we must hurry on to the studio and its interesting story.

It was once a kind of summer-house attached to a crumbling palace that belonged to the Vendramin family —it will be recalled that Wagner lived and died in another Palazzo Vendramin, situated on the right bank of the Grand Canal. When Mr. Woods discovered this delectable pavilion it had two tenants, one a fire-wood dealer, the other a macaroni merchant. The landlord of the building was quite willing to let it to Mr. Woods if the latter could by fair means evict the undesirable occupants. This he

The Basin of St. Mark's, Venice. (1914.)



(By permission of Wolf Harris, Esq.) In the Shade of the Redentore. (1905.)

San Trovaso, Venice. (1906.)

Cloisters of the Frari Church, Venice. (1893.)
(By permission of Wolf Harris, Esq.)

managed to do at the expense of much forcible argument and the, to them, munificent bribe of fifty lira—forty shillings. Once in possession of the house, Mr. Woods soon transformed it into an ideal place for work. The floor separating the lower and upper rooms was removed, and the whole area turned into a studio with a glass roof looking north and running along the entire top of the building. He also introduced to Venice a new kind of studio, one made completely of glass, which he erected at the back in a strip of the palace garden which had been divided into tenements, cultivated chiefly as vineyards. This glass house serves as a winter studio and enables Mr. Woods to obtain quite natural effects of light and colour. In summer days the setting is very beautiful, vine leaves and pomegranate boughs forming a green diapered girdle around this island studio within a mile of the Campo San Marco and a few steps from San Sebastiano and the Guidecca Canal.

For the greater part of the year, however, Mr. Woods works in the open air, in the squares, and in the streets which ever " ebb and flow " with waves of humanity and Adriatic tides. The human tides, unlike those of the Rii and Lagoons, are of extraordinary diversity and interest, and continually but leisurely (there is neither time nor space for hurry in Venice) break in splashes on the Piazza of San Marco through the narrow Merceria, the Regent Street or Bond Street of Venice, over the Piazzetta from the Riva degli Schiavone, and the other inlets to the famous square. It is pleasant to sit at the Florian Café on a summer afternoon or evening and note over an iced coffee or *sirop* the incoming and outgoing of the men, women, and children who form these human waves. But it is far more interesting and instructive to study these waves as they move or rest in *campo* and *calle*, at church or *traghetto*. For those who are not fortunate enough to make this study in reality no

Venice from the Old Campanile. (1890.)
(By permission of Sir W. H. Lever, Bart.)

better pictorial mirror could be found than the prints in this monograph. In them we see reflected with veracity the ebb and flow of Venetian life, generally in its happy moments, when the sky is of turquoise and the air warm and golden with sunlight. We should warn the stranger, however, that he might wander for many days in Venice before he came on such numbers of pretty women as appear in these reproductions. But Mr. Woods' idealisation of types is not a betrayal of truth; it is a composite portrait developed from truth by means of the subtle essences of the artist's mind and heart. This quality of emphasis adds to our enjoyment of these pictures.

It would be impossible to describe in the space at my disposal all the pictures painted by Mr. Woods in Venice. But this limit of word-room need not interfere with the formation of an adequate idea of his art and its mission of pleasure. This can best be effected by dealing with the works that represent his powers as a story-teller and painter in the period of their maturity. As already suggested, we find him fully equipped as an observer and craftsman in "Bargaining for an Old Master," the work of 1882. From that date he was able to stand, tip-toeing so to speak on a Venetian tower of his own building. He could look round from this height confident of his ability to express dramatically the scenes he saw which were in affinity with his temperament and talent. Assurance is evident in the "Preparations for the First Communion" (p. 9), shown at the Royal Academy in 1883. One day Mr. Woods met a girl who was making a communion veil, "hurrying it *per far una prova in tanto*"—that is, the priest was coming in the evening to see this symbol of innocence fitted on the child about to enter the Holy Communion of the Church. In this picture the Padre's visit is delightfully presented. In the midst of parents and friends the young girl is set, shyly sweet in her charming costume, and conscious of the admiration won by her beauty. The priest's praise is naturally restrained, but he is evidently well-pleased with the appearance of the young communicant. The various figures of the principal

An Onion Seller, Venice. (1913.)

group are admirably arranged in front of a fisherman's house, demolished long ago for dock extension. Nets hang drying in the sun, beyond is a canal and high buildings with quaint windows and chimneys, the whole scene vivacious and typically Venetian. Mr. Woods' studio is not far from the Scuola di San Rocco, and in this region many of his most interesting works have been produced. "A Water Seller" (p. 14) is among the most attractive of them. Under the tall towers of San Rocco a bevy of handsome maidens are gathered round a water seller, gossiping about some passing event, it may be a wedding, or some local scandal. This is a very effective panel, rich in colour, distinguished in composition, and flushed with the restful warmth of Venetian light. The same year was responsible for "Cupid's Spell" (p. 31), which has been so long familiar and popular at the Tate Gallery. An etching of it appeared in the *Art Journal* in 1908, and the picture has been otherwise reproduced. The laurel tree in the painting, with others, gave the name to the canal which cut off the Guidecca Island at its western extremity, says Mr. Woods, and with the exception of the Campanile of San Sebastiano in the distance, the buildings were pulled down and a great coal wharf now takes their place, so that apart from

A Venetian Water Seller. (1910.)

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The Water Wheels of Savassa. (1886.)

Serra Valle. (1897.)

(Hulme Hall Art Gallery.
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the spell of Cupid, the painting, like other works of Mr. Woods, has historical value.

Mr. Woods has not confined himself to Venetian subjects. He has found some of his most delightful themes in and near Serra Valle, a lovely spot at the foot of the lower hills north-east of Venice. Serra Valle itself, and Cenada, the adjoining village, are very old, and in the cathedral of the former place there is an altar-piece by Titian, "A Madonna with Saint Andrew and Saint Peter."

It should be stated that Serra Valle and Cenada, which are now joined under the name of Vittorio, are reached by rail from Venice by way of Conegliano—the birthplace of Cima of that ilk. About a mile and a half higher up the valley from Serra Valle lies Savassa, with its quaint water wheels, so admirably presented by Mr. Woods in his picture of the 1886 Academy Exhibition (p. 21), which was "painted entirely on the spot." He came on this charming scene quite by accident while he was searching for the source of the Meschio river, a few hundred yards beyond the mills. The day was very hot, as we can see by the illustration, and the icy cold spray from the wheels was very welcome to Mr. Woods. The beautiful "First Communion Veil" (p. 29), and "La Bella del Paese, or Village Beauty" (p. 30), "First Communion Day" (facing p. 4), "Playmates" (p. 8), and the fine painting belonging to Mr. Ogston of Aberdeen (p. 30), were inspired at Serra Valle. All these pictures are happily arranged and give alluring glimpses of Italian rural architecture.

Gay humour enlivens a number of the pictures reproduced, notably "Rivals" (p. 3), now at Buckingham Palace, and "A Venetian Autolycus" (p. 2). The fair rivals are doing their best to oust each other from the favour of the handsome sailor, who listens evidently amused at the self-glorifying badinage of his lovers. The third woman tries to restrain the brunette, whose excitement suggests that she is losing the contest. Mr. Woods never leaves us in doubt. His stories are clear and interesting from beginning to end. The "Autolycus" is altogether delightful. How the women and children enjoy the eloquence and good looks of this pedlar, and they long to possess his "ribbons for pretty necks" and the other ornaments of his portable *bottega*. Money, however, was scarce on the canal sides when Mr. Woods met "Autolycus," for the artist says he bought the stock in trade for twenty-five francs—one pound—the pedlar afterwards announcing that he had retired from business, he having "handed it over to a painter." When painting the "Cloisters of the Frari Church" (p. 19), Mr. Woods got into trouble with the keeper of the archives, who thought the artist ought

Before the Procession. (1892.)

(By permission of Sir James Murray.)

Washing Day. (1909)

The Chair Mender. (1913)

to have waited until the grass was cut before he began to paint—its long straggling appearance spoiled the look of the place, believed the prim official. This picture, and "Before the Procession" (p. 22), "Il Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo" (p. 1), and the "Statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni" (p. 25), may be selected as representing the artist's success in dealing with classic architectural motives. "The Colleoni" is particularly effective and admirably conveys the nobility of Verrocchio's great achievement. He is even more successful in rendering the domestic architecture of Venice, owing, no doubt, to the stronger appeal of its irregular beauty. Look at the setting of the "Chair Mender" (p. 23). It is very attractive and typical of the surprises of mass and line and colour to be met at every turn in Venice. The little fruit shop in the shade, the bridge over a sluggish Rio, the white or pink-washed houses with red roofs, and the pergola aglow with roses and azaleas illumined by the sun, are sights which ever gladden eye and heart in the sea-born city.

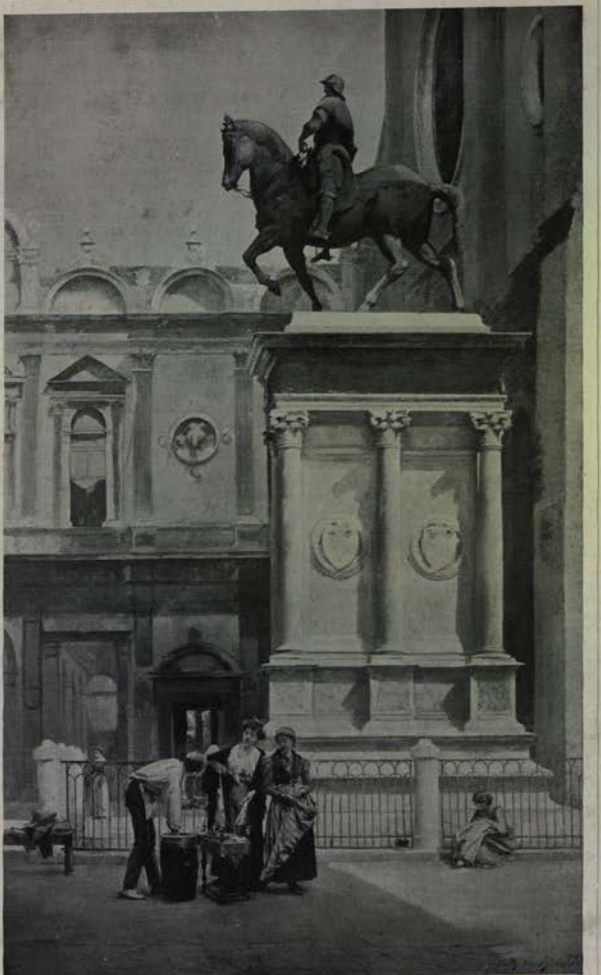
The smaller canals, or Rii, are adequately illustrated in "La Promessa Sposa" (p. 10), "The Fisherman's Courtship" (p. 7), "San Trovaso" (p. 18), and "At the Guidecca" (p. 5). These happy glimpses afford a fine idea of the enchantment of the innumerable waterways, with their beautiful or quaint craft, gay-hued mooring posts, and the little bridges astride the Rii, looking as if proud of their usefulness. The varied traffic and sentimental interest of the quays, also, are fully shown. Here

A Venetian Chair Mender. (1901.)

At San Rocco, Venice. (1901.)

we see two winsome street vendors, there sweethearts cooing in the silence of a lovely nook; in sight of the Salute fair damsels gossip, and by an old well Margharita shows to admiring eyes the golden token of a marriage promise. "La Friulanella" (p. 6)—a native of Friuli, where the Italian guns were heard battering the Austrian forts at Gorizia—was painted in front of the great door of Palladio's Church of the Redentore on the Guidecca Island. Across the canal we see the Salute, the Campanile, the Ducal Palace and the boats lying idly by the Dogana. It is a splendid scene, but, alas, it reminds us that paintable subjects of idyllic description are fast disappearing from the Guidecca. Factories are being rapidly built, and work-people from Venice are crowding into great stacks of depressing flats.

Mr. Woods' ability to manage a crowd is thoroughly established in the entertaining painting of "A Christening Party" (p. 11). The group, led by the dainty baptismal-jug bearer, is very cleverly characterised, and the emotions of each member of the procession are happily expressed. Note how the curious chimneys give a hint of height to the composition, and how skilfully the various textures are differentiated. Note, also, that the supremely happy mother has dispensed with the glass case in which a child is usually borne to be christened. This is one of the



Statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni, Venice. (1914.)

High Street, Serra Valle, Veneto. (1893.)

(Holme Hall Art Gallery.
By permission of Sir W. H. Lever, Bart.)

artist's most important pictures, and it is extremely popular in its place at the Burnley Art Gallery.

The plates in colour help us to form an opinion of Mr. Woods as a colourist. He does not see colour through grimy spectacles. Through sun-flushed, open-aired eyes he looks on the world, and his pictures are healthy in hue and resonant in accent. Gold replies to purple, green to red, and blues ranging to greys keep the more forceful tones in order. This relation of vivid colour is admirably illustrated in "The Ferry" (facing p. 16), or as it was called at the Academy in 1884, "Il mio Traghetto" (My Ferry). The scarlet splash of the girl's head-dress echoes throughout the picture, strongly in wine-red and brick, tenderly in rose and pink, while the green and blue and yellow notes complete a stirring piece of colour-orchestration. The red bodice of the landlady in "The Honeymoon" (facing p. 26) seems to be a trifle detached (due perhaps to the interference of the process man), but there is no detachment in the "Venetian Vintage" (Frontispiece). This is a complete and gracious picture. Everything is elaborately painted, yet as a whole the canvas has a feeling of breadth, of space, and light and air. From the green shade of this delectable spot we gaze across the opalescent Lagoon, north to Venice, lying all rose and gold in the westering glow. This picture was painted on Sacco Sassola, an island made about fifty years ago of dredged clay and mud, where very fine grapes are produced, and where, according to Mr. Woods, the girls are more than passing fair. "I had a most delightful time there," the artist declares. All who see this print will say, "No wonder."

Our sense of charm is stirred by the "Net Maker" (facing p. 10). Broad treatment, notable in the representation of the building and the foliage, suggests a freshness always associated with painting in the open air. Similar qualities distinguish "La Tombola" (facing p. 22), which shows a bevy of girls mildly excited in a gambling game played mainly on fête days in the little-frequented paths along the Guidecca canal. Each Signorina has a card plotted and numbered, and from a bag which is passed round each player takes a tiny block of wood, numbered also, and places it on her card. The winner is she who first fills up the numbered spaces of her card. The stake seldom exceeds one centime, so that the game and the candle, as it were, are costly neither to brain nor pocket.

It has given me very considerable pleasure to introduce the work of Mr. Woods to a wider public than it has hitherto reached, owing mainly to his long residence in Venice. This review, however, is necessarily brief and generally inadequate, but its shortcomings are more than palliated by the numerous reproductions, which, after all, are the most eloquent and just exponents of Mr. Woods' art and temperament. As indicated in the excellent portrait by Sir Luke Fildes (p. 32), Mr. Woods is a man of robust intellect, thoroughly English in quality, and those who know him have a good friend and a genial companion, either at the Athenæum or the Arts Club

Part of the Palace at Stra, near Padua. (1914.)

The School and Church of San Rocco. (1915)

Saluting the Cardinal. (1888.)

(By permission of Lady Dalgleish.)

Church of St. Peter Martyr, Murano, Venice. (1915.)

in London, or in some peaceful corner of his beloved Venice.

Mr. Woods, who was elected a Royal Academician in 1893, is also an ordinary member of the Royal Academy of Venice, the only one of foreign origin.

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Street Trading in Venice.
The Ducal Courtyard, Venice.

1881 ... At the Foot of the Rialto, Venice.
The Gondolier's Courtship.

1882 ... Bargaining for an Old Master (p. 13).
A Venetian Fan Seller.

1883 ... Preparations for the First Communion (p. 9).

1884 ... In the Sun (p. 8).
A "Zucca" Seller, Venice.
"Il Mio Traghetto" (facing p. 16).
Venetian Cloisters.

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A Water Seller at San Rocco, Venice (p. 14).
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Returned from the Rialto.
A Cottage on the Lagune, Venice.

1886 ... Choosing a Summer Gown.
The Water Wheels of Savassa (p. 21).

1887 ... Under the Vine.

1888 ... Saluting the Cardinal (p. 27).
On the Guidecca, Venice.
Gossips.

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The Towers of San Rocco and the Frari, Venice (p. 15).
On the Grand Canal, Venice.

1890 ... On the Riva of the Guidecca.
In the Shade of the Scuola, San Rocco.
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A Greeting.

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The Church of the Frari and School of San Rocco, Venice.

1892 ... In the Belfry on the Campanile of St. Mark's, Venice.
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Cloisters of the Frari Church, Venice (p. 19).

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The Colleoni Statue, Venice.
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"La Tombola," Venice (facing p. 22).

1905 ... A Venetian Vintage (frontispiece).
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In the Shade of the Redentore (p. 17).

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1907 ... Fodder.

La Bella del Paese. (1893.

(Tate Gallery.) Cupid's Spell. (1885.)

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Rosina (p. 1).
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A Fruit Seller, Venice.

Portrait of Henry Woods, R.A., by Sir Luke Fildes, R.A. (1909.)

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The Nearest Hospital to the Firing Line

With 27 Fully Trained British Nurses.

THE Belgian Field Hospital has been with the Belgian Army since the beginning of September, 1914, first at Antwerp, then at Furnes, and now at Hoogstaede. It has always been sufficiently near the firing line to deal promptly with serious cases, and often to save lives which would be lost if they had to be transported to a base hospital.

The only way to save the lives of our seriously wounded is to give them skilled treatment and nursing AT ONCE. The horrors of the wounded and their agony in the trenches may be greatly lessened if an operation can be carried out within a few hours. This is what this Hospital does, but it can only continue to save lives and suffering if the Public will give their support.

Upkeep of Hospital costs £300 a week

£1 will maintain a bed for one week, and this one week often means the difference between life and death.

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Cost of Huts (Usual Size) £300

SMALLER £200. LARGER £400.

COST OF TENTS	£150
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WEEK'S WORKING, £5	abroad
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All under keen, hearty Church Army Workers.

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